

# The Quiet Hour

For Dominion Presbyterian.

## The Christ to Come.\*

BY REV. W. G. JORDAN, D.D.

At this season of the year the thoughts of all Christian people turn to Bethlehem and to the babe who was born there, nineteen centuries ago. We feel that the birth of the child Jesus marked the opening of a new era in the life of the world, that though deep shadows still abound it is true that He brought a new light into the world and that in the Christian home and the life of little children this new light is seen in its truest glory. At this season when our thoughts are of the Prince of Peace we are compelled to think of the horrors of war and many a home is sad because of a loved one who has given his life for his country's cause and died in a distant land. It is a disgrace to our common civilization and Christianity that men who profess the same faith cannot settle their difficulties without having recourse to bloody strife. But we must take large views and not allow the present dark cloud to overshadow all the teachings of history and the lessons of life. There is a sense in which to us as well as to the prophet the Christ is still to come; we need a fuller coming of the Christ to our hearts and homes as well as to our political and social life.

"Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite,  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good;  
Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold,  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace,  
Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

Our religion has done great things in the past, but it is because we believe that the greatest triumphs are still to come that our faith is strong to face the conflicts of life. This thought brings us to the passage before us; it is a beautiful Messianic picture or prophecy of the coming Christ. This forward look was the very essence of the faith of ancient Israel. We are all prone to look back upon the past with feelings of reverence, and nations as well as individuals are in danger of living upon the past. If a man or a nation is to be great there must be faith in the future, and this faith to be real must be a faith that God to whom we owe past blessings will open out for us a still larger life in the coming days. This was always the faith of the prophets; God would not forever cast off his people, and the God-given religion could not die; this faith sustained the prophet in the

darkest hours and enabled him to speak words of comfort to sorrowing souls.

Here we have then: (1) A picture of reversal or compensation. The very people who walked in deepest darkness shall see a great light, those whose land was most exposed to the incursion of the invader and the cruelty of the foreign soldier shall be most richly blessed with the presence of the Prince of Peace. (2) A picture of national joy. As the joy of harvest and the joy of victory shall this joy be. Men who have sown in tears will reap in joy, men who have made sacrifices and waited will have satisfaction. (3) A picture of deliverance. The rod of the oppressor is broken and men find a real king, as in the days of old when God went forth with Israel's arms. So will He manifest Himself again as the nation's helper. (4) A picture of peace. The armour and the garments reeled in blood shall be cast into the fire and men will forget the hateful horrors of war. All this culminates in the person of a child who is to be born, and to whom is given four wonderful names.

It is needless now to enter into an account of the different views that have been taken of this wonderful passage. We are all agreed that only in Jesus whom we call the Christ can all these things find a true fulfilment. Many things should be clear to us which to the prophet were dim, but the great need is that we should have the same mighty faith. Then we shall not only rejoice that God has fulfilled ancient prophecies and sent us the living Christ, but we shall be able to believe that out of the gloom of the present, there shall come through the power of the Christ a higher future for the faithful Christian.

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## How to Make Life Worth Living.

Prof. John Moore, of Boston, lately gave a sermon in the Stanley Street Presbyterian Church, Montreal, on the topic, "How to Make Life Worth Living," based on the text "Who went about doing good." We give a sketch containing some of the principal thoughts, which we feel sure our readers will peruse with interest and profit.

Every man has his desires craving their corresponding objects. Some one of these desires is stronger than any of the others, and gives a direction and coloring to the entire character. This is sometimes called the ruling passion. Christ had a ruling passion in relation to this world, which was to save the lost. He never lost sight of this end. This was the grandest life because the most useful. How are we to do good? The fundamental condition is to be good. What the tree is the fruit is. Noble living is the outgrowth and expression of noble being. Christ did good because He was

good. This outward life was the expression of Himself. He was the most natural man that ever lived because He was the most Divine. There was nothing artificial or conventional about Him. His outward life was a manifestation and not an effort.

We all do good or evil by the influence we exert. This is of two kinds, unconscious and conscious. The first kind is noiseless, but though silent is not the less powerful. This is almost universally lost sight of, because it is not attended with noise and display. We notice that the most potent forces in nature are silent. Light and electricity are silent but most mighty. This sort of influence goes streaming from us in all directions, and it corresponds precisely with what we are. If good ourselves it is good, if bad it is bad. Material objects in nature and art often have a great influence over character, unconscious influence of course. All material surroundings are educating us. If material objects have such a powerful silent influence, how much greater the influence of thinking, feeling, active mind! Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are continually going forth streams of noiseless influence, which are blessing or cursing the world, healing or poisoning around the roots of society and among the hidden wells of character. Thus real goodness of heart is absolutely essential to genuine usefulness.

We are to do good by direct effort. The great teacher was most active. He was no ascetic, shutting himself in from the world, lest He come in contact with it and be defiled. He went about among men ministering to their physical and spiritual needs. He looked on man as man, whether in the garb of royalty and splendor or in the rags of poverty. Wherever He saw a human being, it might be a blind man, a beggar or a child, he recognized an object worthy of His benevolent regard—a soul capable of living and shining forever. Monasticism finds no countenance in Christianity. Christ enjoined upon His followers to imitate His example, by letting their light so shine among men, that they seeing their good works might glorify their Heavenly Father.

There are certain motives adapted to invite and encourage in the work of doing good. One is the good we derive ourselves in benefiting others. All our acts have a reflex influence upon ourselves. When we do good to others there is a corresponding influence that comes back on us. In trying to make others better we enable ourselves. The most active Christians, as individuals, or churches, are the most flourishing.

The end to be gained ought to be a powerful motive. The end is the same that Christ came from heaven to earth to accomplish. This is the salvation of man. There is a great thought that should inspire and stimulate to action. Salvation means something present which extends into the future. It means the pardon and regeneration of the soul, to lift men up in their thoughts, feelings and aims—in a word to make us new creatures in Christ Jesus, and to build up character. The aim is to save men from Hell now and

\*S. S. Lesson for Dec. 24th. - Isaiah ix, 2-7.

Golden Text—"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." - Luke II.